

A Review of Social Cohesion Initiatives and Challenges with a Focus on Jordan and Education

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As conflict and displacement continue to destabilise the economy, security, and prosperity of nations worldwide, the role of social cohesion has become recognised as a key element to achieving sustainable, peaceful, and resilient communities. While the definition of social cohesion varies across disciplines, the consensus based on the literature discussed below views social cohesion as the importance of the cultivating positive relationships, belonging, and trust amongst all members of a community to achieve cohesive societies. This report focuses on the importance of social cohesion in the field of education, reviewing the role of schools in transforming or reinstating social tensions and negative attitudes, and highlighting the importance of social cohesion programming within education to the stability and resilience of communities.

This report reviews current literature on social cohesion, examining current approaches, definitions, and tools that have been implemented to understand and measure social cohesion. It highlights the importance of examining contexts to support social cohesion planning, especially within contexts of displacement. The report identifies key factors which are essential to achieving improved social cohesion within schools in contexts affected by conflict and displacement, including the protection of students in safe schools and through positive practices, the curriculum and its values, the welfare of teachers, and student participation and sense of belonging. These factors are discussed in relation to the systems within and outside schools that may limit or enhance social cohesion in these contexts, including a nation's socioeconomic factors, the effects on community perceptions and participation, on the role of teachers, as well as the effects of displacement on students' resources, mental well-being, and perceptions.

These elements were then further examined within the context of Jordan to provide an overview of the challenges and circumstances that affect social cohesion in the nation, with a focus on social tensions within and around school spaces. Numerous factors appeared to influence social cohesion within Jordan, including those which existed prior to the influx of refugees, such as the level of job opportunities, limited resources, and governing institutions and practices such as the double-shift system. These factors appeared to impact the attitudes of both citizens and refugees due to perceptions of inequality and competitiveness, combined

with rising tensions due to cultural and societal differences between refugee and non-refugee communities. In schools, social tensions appeared to impact students' experiences of participation, learning, and sense of belonging. Importantly, these experiences appeared to vary across the different forms of education: lower levels of social cohesion, with higher incidents of bullying, discrimination, and violence reported in Jordan's formal double-shift schools than in non-formal settings. Studies examining these differences noted that the safety of spaces within and around schools, positive relationships between teachers and students, and opportunities to participate in creative and engaging learning, helped enhance children's positive outlooks. However, the literature which was reviewed for this report also raised the negative implications of segregation which currently exist amongst these forms of educational access for Syrian refugees, finding that integration is key to improving social cohesion within societies by creating opportunities for safe and positive communication.

Despite the challenging context in Jordan, this report reviewed several initiatives that seek to address disrupted social cohesion in the country which have shown positive progress. The table below provides a summary of these initiatives:

Name	Purpose	Actors involved	Year and Status
Generations for Peace	The programme, including its sub-projects such as Nashatati, seeks to reduce violence in schools by developing teachers' capacities through training, as well as creating shared spaces between Syrian and Jordanian students through after-school activities	Generations for Peace, UNICEF, MoE	Launched in 2015. Still in existence and expanding
UNDP's Mitigating the Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis	This programme seeks to enhance the skills and prospects of all communities in Jordan by creating economic opportunities. The programme also encourages dialogue and shared spaces through activities such as arts and theatre.	UNDP	2013-2017
The Danish Refugee Council's Community Centres	Through its own centres, the Danish Refugee Council sought to bring together Jordanians and Syrians to communicate, build shared values, and understand one another. This programme focuses on all members of the communities, including children, by creating shared learning spaces and psychosocial support. Its centres have reached over 14,000 individuals from different communities, 55% of whom are Syrian refugees.	The DRC	Unclear

Action Contre La Faim's Psychosocial Support Programme	This programme sought to help reduce negative attitudes and perceptions in communities by creating spaces for dialogue. The programme brought together Jordanian and Syrian families, helping parents and children form relationships in positive spaces. It reached 7,000 people from refugee and non-refugee communities.	Action Contre La Faim	2014
Ma'an	<p>Initially launched in 2007, the Ma'an programme aims to reduce violence against children by reducing the use of corporal punishment and other violent approaches. It focuses on the development of teacher skills, the formation of school groups that work together towards a common goal, an online survey to help students report violence, and positive approaches in schools. These include the involvement of councils, groups, student parliaments, and the engagement of teachers.</p> <p>In year 2017-2018, a Civil Code of Conduct was launched, as well as a Safe School Board at each school, with the purpose of creating structured and positive interactions within all parties in school as well as with parents. This process also entailed training of members on code of conduct.</p> <p>The monthly e-surveys continue to be conducted.</p> <p>Materials for training are also being reviewed and updated.</p>	MoE, UNRWA, Military Education Schools, and supported by UNICEF	<p>Launched in 2009</p> <p>Still in existence and expanding</p>
Cultivating Inclusive and Supporting Learning Environment	The programme trained educators (N=4,700) and MoE trainers (47) to help address conflict-related trauma by encouraging interactive pedagogies, and also reached out to students (N=102,955, 7,738 of whom are Syrian refugee students), and created 80 Community-Parent Coalitions	USAID, supported by the Queen Rania Teacher Academy and MoE	2013-2016

The programmes indicated significant progress and efforts to enhance social cohesion in Jordan. However, the report also found significant gaps in understanding the effectiveness and evaluation of these programmes. Based on current limitations and shortfalls of these programmes, key recommendations are provided to support further research and planning on social cohesion programming.

The main recommendations included:

- 1. Improving data and evaluation of programmes** by engaging with current organisations and initiatives to bring together data and key lessons.

2. **Supporting teachers' well-being** through enhanced training, improved contracts and security, and certification, as well as examining the benefits of employing Syrian refugee teachers.
3. **Creating shared spaces** to reduce segregation and enhance social cohesion and create positive opportunities for engagement, bonding, and friendship.
4. **Involving the broader community** by engaging not only youth and women but also men and the wider community, especially in relation to school meetings and school-related engagement.
5. **Addressing the psychosocial needs of refugee students** to enhance social cohesion by helping identify students with poor mental health pertaining to the effects of conflict and displacement, and providing improved counselling services.

I. Introduction

This report provides a review of approaches and tools to understanding, promoting, and measuring social cohesion within contexts affected by displacement. It explores the role of schools in promoting social cohesion within these settings by examining the different elements of education that help enhance community co-existence, belonging, and well-being. The first part of this report demonstrates the complex and diverse nature of social cohesion as a concept, providing a review of global approaches and tools adopted in educational contexts. The second part of this report considers Jordan's educational contexts, reviewing current challenges and approaches that disrupt and address social cohesion within the nation. Finally, recommendations for further social cohesion planning in Jordan are provided based on a summary of the literature examined.

II. Defining Social Cohesion

The term social cohesion has gained extensive recognition due to the diverse and multicultural nature of today's population. A review of the literature finds that the definition for social cohesion remains contested, though its role and value is recognised through multi-disciplinary and multidimensional lenses. The lack of shared, theoretically-based, and clearly defined definition to the term remains a major limitation to social cohesion programming (Assaf-Horstmeier et al., 2015). More generally, social cohesion programming is viewed as the cultivation of a sense of belonging and trust within communities. The OECD (2011) argues that a cohesive society is one that seeks to achieve well-being for all its members by building trust and belonging within communities, addressing exclusion and marginalisation, and creating opportunities of social mobility. Social cohesion can be viewed as a process, in which positive relationships and cohesion pertain to building shared values, trust, shared values and reduced disparities, and the capacity to live in harmony together (Green et al., 2003).

Across the literature, measurements of social cohesion appear to fall under two main disciplines: indicators used within the fields of psychology and sociology focusing on social stability, and policy-based approaches examining economic prosperity (Acket, Borsenberger, Dickes, & Sarracino, 2011). However, the notion of 'human capital', relating to the access and sharing of resources, and 'social capital', linked to bonding and belonging, are commonly accepted as prominent elements of social cohesion (Hill, 2011; Dandy & Pe-Pua,

2015). Despite the existence of numerous multidimensional models in approaching these two elements, this report finds that many of the models appear to explore the following (Green et al., 2003; Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2015):

- The sense of belonging in the community
- Inclusion pertaining to access to resources and services
- Participation in civic, social, and community matters
- Recognition through mutual respect and tolerance within communities
- Legitimacy within institutional-level policies

The list above demonstrates the varied challenges that threaten social cohesion and the need for multidisciplinary approaches to social cohesion planning. For example, research finds that social cohesion planning must address issues of equality across resources and services, including health and education, employment opportunities, political freedom, and other forms of security.

Displacement and Social Cohesion

Today, while the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) do not explicitly identify ‘social cohesion’ as a priority within its agenda, other words such as ‘justice’, ‘social inclusion’, ‘equity’ and ‘peace’ used across the seventeen goals mirror some of the major objectives of social cohesion planning (Marco, 2017). However, measuring social cohesion has emerged as key to achieving the agenda of the SDGs (Nilaus Tarp, 2015; Verbeek, 2017). As such, numerous organisations across the world have prioritised social cohesion programming such as through UNESCO’s focus on promoting cultural diversity¹, projects by UNICEF including a collaboration with Generations for Peace in Jordan² (discussed in section IV), and UNDP’s partnership with organisations to develop a social cohesion measurement index³.

This is especially imperative in settings affected by displacement, where social cohesion is deemed as crucial for achieving sustainable peace and development in changing societies. A

¹ <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/culture-and-development/hangzhou-congress/culture-a-driver-and-an-enabler-of-social-cohesion/>

² <http://www.generationsforpeace.org/en/unicef-generations-peace-expand-successful-social-cohesion-programme-40-communities-across-jordan/>

³ <https://www.scoreforpeace.org>

Desk Review to Inform Programming and Project Design by de Berry & Roberts (2018) published by the World Bank finds that a definition and approach to social cohesion within forced migration is limited and not unified. However, it notes that agencies within these settings have come to acknowledge the significant role of social cohesion within contexts affected by the arrival of a high population of displaced people, due to the economic disruption and tensions that follow (de Berry & Roberts, 2018). Furthermore, the review shows that while social cohesion may be threatened by the inequality of opportunities across all communities, there are unique issues that follow displacement which further exaggerate these risks.

Social cohesion planning is also argued to be context-specific. Due to the contextual circumstances that affect communities, perceptions and notions of belonging and acceptance are dependent on numerous factors, such as: pre-existing relationships between those forcibly displaced and host communities, the economic prosperity and stability of the hosting country, cultural and language differences, and national policies (de Berry & Roberts, 2018). While social cohesion is only achieved when inequalities across multiple levels of policies and services are addressed, the role of education emerges as vital to building belonging, peacebuilding, and sustainable communities (Green et al., 2003; Hill, 2011; Novelli & Sayed, 2016).

III. Social Cohesion within Education and Conflict

The role of education in promoting social cohesion has long been recognised and is explicitly noted in UNESCO's Guidelines on Intercultural Education, which states that:

“Education shall be directed to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial and religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.” (Dasli, 2018, p.1)

School settings provide opportunities to address and redefine social tensions by fostering social capital and dialogue between communities. These spaces can be used to promote shared values, respect for diversity, tolerance, and create opportunities for friendships and relationships (Hill, 2011). Within contexts affected by displacement, schools can allow for dialogue between displaced communities and host citizens, allowing for reconciliation and

healing to begin (Danesh, 2008). Literature shows that integration into schools can reduce stigma by allowing communities to learn together, by promoting sensitive curriculum that addresses psychosocial needs, and by helping children attain skills and knowledge to protect children from harm and exclusion. However, the alarming power of schools in doing harm and contributing to conflict and inequality has also been identified in literature (Bush et al., 2000; Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2013). Schools may reinforce inequalities and increase social tensions by exposing students to violence and discrimination, exaggerating the attitudes of groups in society if the curriculum, teaching, and security conditions of schools do not protect all communities. There is a growing area of research that reveals the conflicting roles that education may take, and the link between school practices and social cohesion within society, has led to important areas of study that seek to understand how education can better protect students and society and transform inequalities.

In completing this report, an extensive review of the literature examining global strategies and tools for assessing social cohesion in education was conducted. However, this review found that while this field is receiving increasing interest, little theoretical or empirical data is available (Guay, 2015). For example, a report by the Danish Refugee Council (2017) notes that while numerous social cohesion programmes have been implemented in Jordan, the effects of these programmes have not been examined or published. This section will draw on research about the strategies, tools, and approaches linked to social cohesion within education, with an additional focus on contexts affected by displacement.

Approaches to Promoting and Understanding Social Cohesion within Education

Due to the multidimensional nature of social cohesion programming, approaches to understanding and examining social cohesion vary according to the specific subfield. While the specific indicators of social cohesion according to discipline, this report sought to bring together the shared notions and goals of social cohesion across policies and approaches, as well as examine any specific approaches within education. Within education in conflict-affected areas specifically, very few approaches that seek to measure or promote social were identified. However, the reports *Peacebuilding Education and Advocacy in Conflict-Affected Contexts Programme: A Compilation of Tools for Measuring Social Cohesion, Resilience, and Peacebuilding* by UNICEF (2014) and the *Social Cohesion and Forced Displacement: A Desk Review to Inform Programming and Project Design* by de Berry & Roberts (2018) were

very valuable in helping illustrate the different dimensions of social cohesion that are relevant to education within contexts of displacement. In addition to these reviews, this report draws on academic papers and grey literature to demonstrate how social cohesion may be promoted through education and suggested tools where available, as discussed in the subsections below.

Based on the review of interdisciplinary approaches, this report first outlines tools that are used to assess social cohesion within education in contexts of displacement. Below are key indicators that appear relevant and key to planning for the assessment of social cohesion (INEE, 2013; UNICEF, 2014; Pham & Vinck, 2017), including:

1. Understanding Context

Social cohesion tools must respond to the challenges that affect the particular context being studied, including governing politics, resources available, and the geographical, economic, and cultural influencers.

2. Assessing three dimensions of social cohesion:

a. Belonging and Inclusion

Relating to the sense of connection to a wider community, recognition, and to equity in accessing opportunities and services.

b. Tolerance

Pertaining to acceptance and respect for diversity.

c. Participation

Referring to an individual's ability to participate in social, political, and civic rights. In schools, this can relate to school activities, friendships and relationships, and forms of learning.

Furthermore, assessment can also draw on the Social Cohesion Index developed by Langer, Stewart, Smedts, & Demarest (2017) which draws on multiple fields and acknowledges the importance of belonging and trust to relationships discussed below, but suggests that three relationships are key to social cohesion:

- 1) Relationships amongst individuals within the same group
- 2) Relationships across different groups

3) Relationships between individuals, groups, and the state

While these indicators are useful in designing assessment tools, planning and promoting social cohesion is dictated by other numerous factors, as shown below.

Factors Influencing Social Cohesion within Education

This subsection of the report also identifies factors which appear relevant to education more specifically. The below elements are found to be central to helping promote social cohesion within school spaces. Based on a review of approaches and tools, key terms include:

- Protection of students: schools providing physical protection and non-discriminative spaces that are absent of bullying, corporal punishment, and negative attitudes
- Student participation: belonging through integration, inclusion, and participatory pedagogical approaches
- Welfare of teachers: training, support, and appropriate terms of work
- Curriculum: accreditation, language of instruction, learner-centred and participatory nature, shared values, and conflict-sensitive

Equal and Safe Access to Education and Services

Within contexts affected by displacement, access to resources and services such as education is a prominent step to assessing whether social cohesion is possible. Studies argue that social cohesion cannot be achieved without equality across all systems and levels in a nation. For example, while school spaces are key to improving social cohesion, opportunities for employment and access to health services greatly influence whether refugee students benefit fully from the value of access to education. These include protecting students from poverty, violence, exploitation into labour and other forms of negative coping, and poor mental and physical health (Dryden-Peterson, 2011; DeJong et al., 2017; Burde et al., 2017). Notably, the form of access to education in contexts of displacement is also crucial. As highlighted by the INEE Guidance Note on Conflict Sensitive Education report by the INEE (2013), protective social services are needed to build social cohesion and resilience. The report argues that understanding context is crucial to developing conflict-sensitive education, approached through ensuring equal access to education and protecting all members and services involved.

Furthermore, defining equality in access to education is contested by the different forms of access to education. Education for refugees is provided through formal, non-formal, and informal education⁴. The contexts in which these are accessed present varying benefits and limitations and must therefore be examined accordingly. For example, refugees may reside and access services within camps, self-settlement, urban or non-urban cohabitation settings (de Berry & Roberts, 2018). Integration into formal school settings may increase access to certified education and inclusion within the community (Craig, 2015; Bellino & Dryden-Peterson, 2018). However, limited school spaces and governing policies have resulted in different forms of access to integration within communities. As such, examining whether systems have succeeded in achieving ‘integration’ is challenged by the contested and fragmented definitions of the term (Ager & Strang, 2008; Dubus, 2018). A further discussion of these challenges is discussed in IV. *Social Cohesion Approaches in Jordan*, which outlines how settlement and different forms of education may impact social cohesion differently.

Curriculum

An important research field area explores the connection between curriculum, conflict, and disrupted social cohesion. Studies have illuminated the critical link between curricula and conflict, as curricula may carry negative political and cultural agendas by emphasising the values of a specific society (Bush et al., 2000; Tawil & Harley, 2004; Paulson, 2011). Curriculum is therefore able to either promote tolerance and acceptance or reinstate attitudes that lead to marginalisation (Tawil & Harley, 2004; Clarke & O’Donoghue, 2013).

Within contexts of displacement, tailoring curricula to address the needs of all students is crucial to effective learning, sustainable peace, and social cohesion. According to the INEE Conflict Sensitive Guidance Note (INEE, 2013), curriculum planning must take into account:

1. Cultural, social, and linguistic needs: this includes addressing the needs of children whose education has been disrupted due to conflict
2. Learning processes: teaching pedagogies must be inclusive, learning-centred, and engaging

⁴ See University of Sussex (2019) *The Education of Syrian Refugees in Jordan: Issues of Access and Quality. A review of policies and initiatives*. Written by Mona Younes, M.Ed.

3. Sensitive approaches to topics relating to peace: such as human rights, citizenship, non-violence
4. Unbiased curriculum: promoting tolerance, equality, acceptance, and challenging existing stereotypes

In response to conflict and displacement, peace education and peacebuilding activities have emerged as important concepts that can complement curriculum to enhance social cohesion. Peace education seeks to equip students with the skills and knowledge needed to address divisions and tensions of conflict, build trust, and create healing (Danesh, 2006; Harber & Sakade, 2009; Clarke-Habibi, 2018). This is further discussed in *Addressing Conflict Experiences* below.

Teachers' Roles

Examining teachers' roles as agents of social cohesion is an important area of academic research, especially within the field of emergency education. Studies have recognised that teachers play a crucial role in whether educational spaces transform or repeat inequalities and discrimination (Halai & Durrani, 2018). Within policy planning, programmes such as *Peacebuilding, Education, and Advocacy* have been implemented to help support teachers in actively promoting social cohesion (Novelli et al., 2015; Halai & Durrani, 2018). Within conflict-affected settings, teachers have the capacity to address conflict-driven surroundings (Novelli & Smith, 2011). In this area of research, the 4 R's framework by Novelli et al., (2015) has emerged as useful approach to enhancing peacebuilding and social cohesion. Like the notions discussed above, the framework examines four dimensions of inequalities that education systems can seek to address:

- Redistribution: equity and non-discrimination in education access and resources
- Recognition: respect, trust, and recognition within the community
- Representation: participation across the education systems and representation within all decision-making processes
- Reconciliation: building social cohesion through promoting trust and addressing effects of the past, including injustices, psychosocial needs, and trauma

The framework recognises that training, access to resources, and representation of teachers' is vital to helping teachers become active agents of social cohesion. As noted by this framework and the INEE Guidance Note (INEE, 2013; Novelli & Sayed, 2016), teachers' well-being must be supported in order to enhance social cohesion by ensuring that their needs are addressed. Most significantly, this includes the need for equitable access to opportunities of training and development to address social tensions in schools. Secondly, a crucial aspect of supporting teachers in contexts affected by conflict and displacement is ensuring that teachers achieve equitable and secure conditions of work, including secure contracts and fair pay.

Community Involvement

Achieving social cohesion is strongly correlated with enhanced belonging and positive connections within the wider community (UNICEF, 2014). This report found that effective programmes to increasing social cohesion within schools engage the wider community by creating dialogues with parents, community workers, and children (Dagenais et al., 2008). Research shows that dialogic approaches enable sharing voices of different groups in order to enhance the understanding of the *Other* (Bialostocka, 2017). Furthermore, studies have demonstrated that an enriched understanding of parents' background and circumstances at home which may help teachers respond to students' needs more appropriately (Hope, 2011). In a study arguing for an integrative approach to peace education, Danesh (2006) portrays the importance of involving the community including teachers, students, parents, and the wider community to create a transformative process that enhances collaboration, peace, and harmony within society. However, more research is needed to understand the links between community involvement within schools and social cohesion, and to identify best approaches. Examples of social cohesion programmes involving communities are provided in section IV. *Social Cohesion Approaches in Jordan.*

Addressing Conflict Experiences

A final dimension which may limit or enhance social cohesion is whether students' psychosocial needs are addressed. This report finds that refugee communities may suffer from trauma and low well-being due to their experiences through conflict and displacement. As noted by Dryden-Peterson (2016), students' pre-settlement experiences may impact the ways in which students are able to aspire and engage in their education. Here, additional

exposure to trauma that students may be exposed to, such as discrimination, may greatly impact students' mental health (Stark et al., 2015).

In schools, the role of teachers in helping identify students with difficulties and poor mental health is crucial (Tyrer & Fazel, 2014). In *A Systematic Review of School-Based Social-Emotional Interventions for Refugee and War-Traumatized Youth* by Sullivan & Simonson (2016), it is noted that positive mental health for refugees is linked to schools where positive relationships are made, and a sense of belonging and self-efficacy are achieved. However, the report also discusses the high demand for psychosocial services to support refugees, and the role of schools in supporting students' needs. Through a comprehensive review of school interventions that address refugee students' needs, the report also notes that arts-based and creative approaches were most commonly used and deemed as effective. These approaches use arts, music, and drama to allow students to express, process, and reduce trauma-related difficulties. Other programmes sought to incorporate Cognitive Behaviour Therapy to teach students about symptoms of trauma and other PTSD-related mental health issues. Furthermore, multi-modal approaches have also been identified as important services which not only focus on pre-displacement experiences but also address social and cultural adaptation (Tyrer & Fazel, 2014). In projects led by partners of the International Alert⁵, trained educators also engaged with schools by providing mentorship and regular psychotherapy sessions to students (Simpson, 2018).

IV. Social Cohesion Approaches in Jordan

As the understanding of context helps shape social cohesion programing, this second part of the report explores social cohesion in Jordan, including current challenges, approaches, and influencing dimensions. This section is guided by dimensions of education identified earlier in this report which appear to have an effect on social cohesion, discussing these in relation to Jordan.

Social Cohesion and Perceptions in Jordan

Notably, several reports in Jordan have studied the state of social cohesion in Jordan, including *Jordanian Hosts and Syrian Refugees: Comparing Perceptions of Social Conflict*

⁵Peace education' projects by International Alert have been implemented in Syria, Lebanon, and Turkey through referral services, mentoring, and the involvement of peaceful dialogue to address conflict-related trauma, which the NGO identified as one of the key barriers to social cohesion.

and Cohesion in Three Host Communities (Seeley, 2015), *Social Cohesion in Times of Forced Displacement – the case of young people in Jordan* (Kuhnt et al., (2017), *Social Cohesion Between Syrian Refugees and Urban Host Communities in Lebanon and Jordan* (Assaf-Horstmeier et al., 2015) and *Syrian Refugees and Social Cohesion in Jordan* (Dorsey, Lockhart & Barker, 2018). Studies have linked issues of social tensions and bullying as one of the key factors of dropout and low learning attainment for Syrian refugee students in Jordan, demonstrating the importance of this area of research in the country and the pressing need for further tools and approaches.

Firstly, the findings of these reports demonstrate that social cohesion can only be addressed through a multidisciplinary approach. Tensions between the Jordanian and Syrian refugee communities appear to be driven by three areas of inequity (Assaf-Horstmeier et al., 2015):

- 1) Issues prior to conflict: poverty, resource scarcity, and ineffective governing institutions
- 2) Socioeconomic divisions: including cultural, religious, and social divisions between the refugee and host communities
- 3) Competition, Access, and Inequity:
 - a. Access to quality and affordable housing
 - b. Competition over jobs
 - c. Access to, and the quality of, services: education, medical services, water resources, and other already-strained infrastructures
 - d. Tensions raised by perceptions of injustice and inequity in the distribution of international aid

The levels of tensions due to these factors also appear to vary across host, rural and camp settings in Jordan. In a study surveying over 6,000 households, over 75 per cent of Jordanian respondents reported an increase in social tensions due to water scarcity, job competition and an increase in living costs (Kuhnt et al., 2017). The effects of these tensions are evident in the interactions between refugee and non-refugee communities. For example, a study by REACH (2014)⁶ notes that schools are points of contact between Jordanian and Syrian refugee

⁶ REACH conducted an assessment to examine the key challenges to social cohesion in Jordan through a desk-based review and case selections through surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions across a number of governorates and communities in Jordan

children, where confrontation and tensions surface as a result of the changing dynamics in the nation, including perceived cultural differences and concerns over the declining quality of education due to the refugee crisis. Therefore, social cohesion programming within the country must address numerous challenges. Importantly, Jordan's *National Resilience Plan* explicitly recognises the importance of social cohesion to address the needs of both host and refugee communities in the country (Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, 2014), inspiring numerous projects as described below.

Challenges within Education

School spaces allow for social tension to surface as they become daily points of contact between the Jordanian and Syrian refugee communities (Seeley, 2015). To meet the new demands for access within educational settings, the Ministry of Education created double-shift system schools in host communities⁷, helping refugees integrate into the formal national system and attain certified education. Additional access to education is provided through formal and non-formal education in camps, rural, and urban settings in Jordan. While the experiences of students across these settings have not been studied in-depth, research shows that each setting may provide its own benefits and limitations. For example, a study conducted by the Education Working Sector Group (2015) draws on a nationwide study and household survey that sought to understand Syrian refugees' urgent needs. A prominent goal of the study was to understand Syrian refugee students' experiences of formal, non-formal, and informal education in Jordan. Notably, the study found that:

- More positive perceptions and experiences were linked to non-formal education settings, where students found their experiences were positive due to their close relationships with their teachers and the more flexible school schedules.
 - The study also finds that students enjoyed a range of activities, including arts, gardening, and sports.
- Issues of safety around school affected students' experiences in non-formal and formal schools, as students experience harassment on the way to school.
- In formal education, students expressed fear of safety and experienced discrimination, bullying from other students, and lack of interest from teachers.

⁷ The double-shift system was first introduced in Jordan in 1960. However, this system majorly expanded over the last few years to accommodate for the number of Syrian refugee children in need of education.

- Notably, the extent of these issues varied by school level, with a higher number of students experiencing discrimination, bullying, and conflicts in school in secondary education.
- In schools where Jordanians and Syrian students were integrated, some Syrian refugee students believed that conflicts may be reduced if they were segregated into schools for Syrian students only.
- Community members, such as parents and teachers, expressed a desire to be more involved in schools.
- Students expressed a desire for extracurricular activities.

As shown above, this study illustrates the differences and variance of challenges influencing social cohesion in Jordan across different education systems. Higher levels of social tensions have been linked to formal schools due to Jordanian families fearing for the quality of education, which has been reduced by the double-shift system. The double-shift system has reduced the number of school hours for both Jordanians and Syrians (REACH, 2014). Furthermore, the high demand for school spaces has also resulted in overcrowded classrooms, insufficient number of trained teachers, and overstrained infrastructure and services (REACH, 2014; Van Esveld & Martínez, 2016). Within the restrictions posed by the limited educational capacities in Jordan, programme planning for social cohesion must seek to enhance two main dimensions of schools: teachers' well-being and issues of security (Kuhnt et al., 2017).

Teachers' Capacities in Jordan

Teachers who teach the afternoon shift (for Syrian refugee students) of double-shift schools, as well as those who teach in camp schools, are employed on short-term contracts that lack the security and benefits; such contracts lack the security and benefits, including medical insurance and paid vacations, that traditional contracts provide (Tom et al., 2016; Van Esveld & Martínez, 2016). The insufficient number of teachers with adequate training in needed disciplines has also resulted in teachers teaching outside their areas of expertise. Furthermore, in a study by Van Esveld & Martínez (2016), teachers reported that they found it challenging to address the needs of refugee children who showed trauma-related symptoms. Finally, in addition to lack of sufficient training and support for teachers, negative teaching approaches pre-dating the Syrian conflict, such as corporal punishment, continue to impact students' experiences in schools (Van Esveld & Martínez, 2016). As described in Section III of this

report, these factors may reduce teachers' well-being, desire to teach, and capacities to identify and respond to Syrian refugee students' needs appropriately.

Non-formal education in host communities and camps were perceived by Syrian families to be of higher quality. These programmes encouraged extracurricular activities that may address psychosocial needs (Education Working Sector Group, 2015), and they were also designed to address the needs of Syrian refugee children, often taught by Syrian refugee teaching assistants who understood students' needs (Tom et al., 2016). By 2016, around 200 Syrian refugee teachers were allowed to teach as assistants in camps only (Van Esveld & Martínez, 2016). Through UNICEF's support, 700 Syrian refugee teachers were provided with job opportunities to teach in Zaatari camp. However, in 2018, this initiative was halted due to a lack of continued funding (Hafez, 2018). Allowing Syrian refugee teachers to assist Jordanian teachers has been argued to help not only respond to refugees' needs, but also create collaborations and engagement between Syrian and Jordanian teachers (Tom et al., 2016). After the London Syria Conference in 2016, Jordan pledged to allow 1,000 Syrian refugee teachers to be employed as assistants in host communities through the help of donor support (Van Esveld & Martínez, 2016). However, no further studies or recent publications were found on Syrian refugee teacher assistants in host communities.

Students and Perceptions in the Wider Community

A study by Seeley (2015) conducted focus groups with Jordanian and Syrian parents to understand their perceptions of one another, finding that negative perceptions led to reduced access to education for Syrian refugee and increased isolation of refugee communities. In schools and around schools, high levels of bullying and discrimination have remained a key issue in the last seven years, impacting students' psychosocial well-being, learning attainment, and likelihood of drop out (Education Working Sector Group, 2015; Seeley, 2015; Salem, 2018). The forms of discrimination and bullying that students experienced varied by gender, with girls more likely to experience sexual assault and boys more likely to experience violence (Education Working Sector Group, 2015). In 2016 alone, UNICEF reported that 1,600 Syrian refugees dropped out of school due to bullying (Van Esveld & Martínez, 2016). In segregated schools, these forms of bullying were reported within school by teachers and during the journey made from or to school. While discrimination and bullying were noted in numerous studies, this report did not find any tools implemented in schools that sought to help refugee students report incidents to administrative staff or teachers

in schools and seek protection. However, the use of corporal punishment and violent disciplinary approaches in schools has been identified as an issue in Jordan. As a result, the Ma'an (Together) Safe School Environment campaign expanded in Jordan to help reduce violence in schools across Jordan (discussed further in next section).

Studies in Jordan note that, rather than continued isolation and segregation, creating opportunities for shared spaces that encourage communication between Jordanians and Syrians is necessary to addressing issues of security and reducing tensions between communities (REACH, 2014b; Van Esveld & Martínez, 2016). These spaces may allow Jordanian and Syrian refugee students to interact, form friendships, and enhance empathy and understanding of one another. Formal spaces are seen as key opportunities to building social cohesion by fostering belonging and trust based on common goals (REACH, 2014a). Here, the importance of enhancing teachers' capacities to foster positive relationships between Syrians and Jordanians in mixed, positive, and safe spaces is also crucial, helping interrupt isolation and negative cycles of discrimination (Seeley, 2015).

Furthermore, Syrian refugee students' mental health needs remain inadequately addressed. While some initiatives have been implemented to provide psychosocial support for Syrian refugee students, as discussed in the next section, the majority of students do not have the support needed to overcome war-related trauma and reconcile with hardships faced during displacement. However, appropriate tools to help conflict-related trauma is necessary to reach reconciliation and prevent further conflict (Paulson, 2011; Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2013). A study conducted with Syrian refugee families and children in Jordan shows that poor mental health and post-traumatic stress is also linked with factors outside of schools, including economic hardships and limitations (Rizkalla & Segal, 2018). As integration is key to promoting social cohesion, social cohesion programming must consider how integration can be maximised across all systems as well as seek to address children's mental health and strengthen aspiration and resilience amongst students (Acosta & Chica, 2018; Rizkalla & Segal, 2018). Most importantly, schools must be central to addressing peacebuilding and pluralism within an integrative approaches across different institutions (Colenso, 2005).

Current Tools, Goals, and Projects in Jordan

Jordan's *Regional and Refugee Resilience Plan in Responding to the Syria Crisis* has continually recognised the importance of social cohesion for the security and prosperity of Jordan and its communities, calling for increased focus on strengthening community resilience and reducing social tensions (3RP, 2018). Notably, this report finds this recognition has influenced the implementation of several programmes on social cohesion in Jordan. However, there is little comprehensive data available on the effectiveness, progress, and assessment of these programmes, revealing a gap and opportunity for further research (Danish Refugee Council, 2017). This section provides an overview of some of the most relevant social cohesion programmes with children and youth that are currently implemented in Jordan through non-governmental organisations and the Ministry of Education.

Generations for Peace's After-School Programme:

In 2015, the programme *Social Cohesion in Host Communities* was delivered in 16 centres in Jordan. By 2017, the programme was scaled to 40 centres. The programme's aims were to address issues relating to social cohesion through empowerment and skill-development in areas of high tensions and risks between Jordanians and Syrian refugees. The programme included activities developed through sports and arts engagement that sought to influence behaviour-change for both Syrian and Jordanian communities, including the *Sports for Peace and Democracy* (Clark, 2015; Zkarneh, 2017).

The Generations for Peace also implemented additional programmes in schools that sought to address violence and discrimination in schools and has reached 100 schools through the *Nashatati* programme, by:

- **Enhancing teachers' training:** Launched by the Ministry of Education and in collaboration with UNICEF and Generations for Peace Programme, nearly 400 teachers have received training through the *Nashatati* programme to oversee activities through daily sessions that seek to enhance social cohesion between Syrian and Jordanian students after school and on Saturdays (Generations for Peace, 2018). The training helps teachers prepare to create conflict-transforming activities that allow teachers to 'teach students valuable skills that empower them to manage the demands

and challenges of their daily lives'. This programme is now in its second year and has been scaled to reach more students in the 2018-2019 school year.

- Encouraging shared spaces between students: The *Nashatati* programme allows students from grade 1 to 10 to engage in after-school activities that promote tolerance, acceptance, skill-development, and social cohesion through shared and protected spaces (Generations for Peace, 2018). The *Nashatati* programme allows Jordanian and Syrian students to meet and interact through the mediation of trained teachers and work together on sports and life skills. The programme reached 200 schools in the 2018-2019 school year.

A report by the Life Skills and Citizenship Education Initiative Middle East and North Africa (2018) sharing preliminary results of the programme revealed that participating students and teachers experienced increased confidence, tolerance and openness to engaging with others of different age groups and nationalities, positive communication such as reduced confidence, and an enhanced sense of community and belonging. However, further results and evaluations of the programme are not available.

UNDP's Mitigating the Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Jordanian Host Communities

The United Nations Development Programme launched the *Mitigating the Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Jordanian Host Communities* in 2013, under which several approaches fall, including the *Community Cohesion Grant Mechanism* in 2015 (Maccan, 2018). The project's focus is to address the needs of Jordanian and Syrian communities, including creating short-term employment opportunities, skill exchange between both communities, and enhancing community security. The *Community Cohesion Grant Mechanism* targeted the governorates of Irbid, Zarqa, Tafeeleh, and Ma'an. The aim of the project is to create spaces for dialogue and interaction between the two communities, spaces for cultural diversity including arts and theatre, as well as address the specific needs of women and youth.

Danish Refugee Council's Community Centres

The Danish Refugee Council's centres seek to foster social cohesion by creating more frequent and continuous interactions between communities in Jordan (Danish Refugee Council, 2017). The centres offer varying forms of support, including community group events, psychosocial support, training and support, and child-friendly spaces for learning of shared values. The DRC conducted a mixed methods study between 2016 and 2017 to evaluate the effectiveness of the community centres in strengthening social cohesion. It found that the centre provided a sense of safety for the community in that area and that it contributed to improved perception of the other. However, the study also found that changing the perceptions of individuals in Amman was more challenging due to social tensions relating to employment. Like other studies, most participants involved were women and youth, and thus the effectiveness of the programme did not reach the wider community.

Action Contre la Faim's Psychosocial Support Programme

The non-governmental organisation, *Action Contre la Faim*, implemented a programme in Jordan that sought to enhance positive engagement between Syrian and Jordanian communities and improve psychosocial well-being (Acosta & Chica, 2018). The programme was implemented through its own centres as well as other community-based centres. It brought together families and children from Jordanian and Syrian communities for several sessions over two months, facilitating discussions, activities, and sharing in safe spaces. This programme brought communities together through shared subjects and challenges, such as health and motherhood. Discussions around discrimination and mistreatment that were raised by parents were discussed, and expression was facilitated through programme coordinators. The main participants of this study were mothers and children. An assessment of this study found that participants gained more confidence, formed friendships and positive relationships between communities, and reported feeling less isolated and afraid (Acosta & Chica, 2018).

Ma'an (Together) towards a Safe School Environment Programme

Initially, the Ma'an programme was launched in 2009 by the Ministry of Education, UNRWA, and Military Education Schools with the support of UNICEF to address the use of corporal punishment and violence in schools. The programme has now expanded to respond to the increasing reports of violence in schools following the Syrian refugee crisis. Today, the programme has also been scaled to reach double-shift system schools and camps (UNICEF, 2017). The Ma'an programme is currently comprised of five main activities:

- Administrative actions in the Ministry that promote the key goals of Ma'an to all schools and staff.
- School activity groups: the formation of groups to allow for communication between school teachers and staff through joint work for a common goal, as well as the engagement of the community, including parents, to promote zero-tolerance of violence in school.
- The Ma'an online survey: A monthly survey that monitors percentages of reported verbal and physical violence inflicted by teachers, as well as positive strategies used in schools. This survey is completed by students under the supervision of a supervisor. Participants are selected randomly (grades 4-10 only).
- Capacity development of teachers and educators: a training programme for teachers and educators is a key component of the programme, providing teachers with classroom management skills to reduce the use of corporal punishment. The training also involved counsellors and principals, who were equipped with the skills needed to guide teachers in achieving the goals of Ma'an. Counsellors in this initiative also engage with students through life-skills programmes that promote communication skills, self-management skills, and problem-solving.
- In 2013, the UNICEF launched 'Tarbiyah' to enhance the Ma'an programme by encouraging reward systems in schools to help create positive engagement between teachers and students.

In an evaluation completed by UNICEF (2016), the findings show that the programme has accomplished a reduction in incidents of violence inflicted by teachers. Its goals and results present a positive approach to addressing violence affecting students in Jordan. However, the study also notes that the programme has not been able to respond to the influx of refugees and the consequent challenges. Importantly, overcrowded classrooms and schools with few resources that require physical enhancement through correspondence outside the Ma'an initiative represent a critical barrier. The report also finds that the capacity of parents remains a missing but integral part of the programme, as violence at home hinders the transformative goal of the initiative. Finally, the Ma'an initiative must be scaled to respond to the needs of Syrian and Jordanian students where tensions are most visible.

Initiatives to Support the Ministry of Education

Through the launch of its 2018-2022 Education Strategic Plan⁸, the Ministry of Education has highlighted its renewed focus on increasing community engagement to address students' needs in schools. The strategy recognises the importance of addressing all students' needs, including refugee children and vulnerable Jordanian children (special needs children and children living in poverty-stricken areas), and shows that the capacities of teachers, parents, students, and the wider community is crucial to enhancing the quality, safety, and cohesion of all communities in Jordan. To achieve the 2018-2022 agenda, the Ministry urges schools to form three school-interrelated associations:

- The Safe School Environment: the Ma'an programme described above
- The Parents-Teachers Associations: to encourage parents' interest and engagement with their children's education and progress
- Student Parliaments: the formation of student parliaments to allow students to be able to communicate effectively

Additionally, at the network level, two key councils must be formed:

- The Schools Parliament: The parliaments are expected to encourage decentralisation in school management by involving the community, examining the needs of schools and priority areas, and presenting these findings to the development team. The parliament is responsible for the establishment of a student parliamentary council starting grade 5, providing reports on issues that affect the general school and community, with identified problems and solutions.
- The Education Development Councils: These councils are expected to review the progress of implemented school development plans, encourage a shared understanding of community partnerships, and exchange experiences, positive findings, and lessons learned across school networks.

⁸ http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/jordan_education_strategic_plan_esp_2018-2022.pdf

Other Projects

This report also found several other projects, including the *Bridging the Youth and Their Community* (Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development, 2017) and the Johud's projects (Johud, 2019) that sought to address the needs of refugee and non-refugee communities through fostering skills, employment opportunities, and psychosocial support sessions, and community engagement. However, little data was found on some of the programmes' effectiveness or programme reach.

Similarly, an important project is the *Cultivating Inclusive and Supporting Learning Environments* project⁹, which has been implemented in over 350 schools across eight governorates in Jordan by USAID in partnership with the Queen Rania Teacher Academy and the Ministry of Education. The project's primary goal is to support students in receiving education in a safe and inclusive environment by providing training for teachers. The project recognises the impact of conflict and trauma on the classroom, and seeks to better equip teachers with the knowledge, training, and skills needed to better manage these challenges. Secondly, the project also encourages the integration of Syrian refugee children into the Jordanian school system and promotes peaceful dialogue between the two communities. Lastly, the project also recognises the importance of community involvement and raising awareness to encourage engagement, peaceful co-existence, and dialogue. The project has reached over 100,000 students and 4,700 educators.

Importantly, other initiatives which support or are supported by the Ministry of Education have been implemented. The Makani initiative, funded by the UNICEF and supported by the Ministry of Education, seeks to enhance well-being and protect vulnerable children by providing safe and interactive spaces for learning, and help develop life skills for youth (UNICEF, 2015). Madrasati, an initiative launched in 2008, and affiliate to the Queen Rania Foundation, seeks to address the most disadvantaged public schools identified by the Ministry of Education and improve the physical and socio-emotional factors in schools to enhance all students' learning. The initiative focuses on resources and physical infrastructure through investments in equipment and supplies, as well as professional development for teachers and the enhancement of opportunities relating to safety, health, skill-development, and hygiene (Queen Rania Foundation for Education and Development, 2015).

⁹ See <https://www.usaid.gov/jordan/fact-sheets/cultivating-inclusive-supportive-learning-environments>

V. Implications for Social Cohesion Planning and Conclusions

This report reviewed the interdisciplinary definitions and approaches to the term *Social Cohesion*. By focusing on its role within education in contexts of conflict and displacement, social cohesion here is viewed as the extent to which all communities are able to belong, participate, form affiliation, and learn together in peaceful and inclusive environments. However, the report also uncovered some of the key approaches to planning and assessing social cohesion both generally and within education, describing common factors and relationships which have been recognised as central to defining social cohesion. Furthermore, the report reviewed the role of social cohesion within contexts of education and displacement, presenting the main challenges and influencing factors involved.

These factors were implemented to provide a situational analysis of social cohesion in Jordan and the role of schools. Due to high levels of social tensions caused by fear and competition over scarce resources and job opportunities, this report found that violence and bullying within and around school spaces threaten social cohesion in Jordan between refugee and non-refugee communities, and reduce Syrian refugee students' learning and likelihood of continuing school. Enhancing teachers' well-being through improved work conditions and adequate training and resources was recommended as key to addressing social tensions in Jordan. Furthermore, Jordan's segregated solution for increasing education spaces also appeared to reinforce a cycle of community isolation and negative perceptions. The report reviewed some of the most relevant social cohesion programmes in Jordan, finding that while many initiatives exist, little data is available on the effectiveness of these programmes.

The table below summarises the main key initiatives implemented that seek to enhance social cohesion in Jordan:

Name	Purpose	Actors involved	Year and Status
Generations for Peace	The programme, including its sub-projects such as Nashatati, seeks to reduce violence in schools by developing teachers' capacities through training, as well as creating shared spaces between Syrian and Jordanian students through after-school activities	Generations for Peace, UNICEF, MoE	Launched in 2015. Still in existence and expanding

UNDP's Mitigating the Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis	This programme seeks to enhance the skills and prospects of all communities in Jordan by creating economic opportunities. The programme also encourages dialogue and shared spaces through activities such as arts and theatre.	UNDP	2013-2017
The Danish Refugee Council's Community Centres	Through its own centres, the Danish Refugee Council sought to bring together Jordanians and Syrians to communicate, build shared values, and understand one another. This programme focuses on all members of the communities, including children, by creating shared learning spaces and psychosocial support. Its centres have reached over 14,000 individuals from different communities, 55% of whom are Syrian refugees.	The DRC	Unclear
Action Contre La Faim's Psychosocial Support Programme	This programme sought to help reduce negative attitudes and perceptions in communities by creating spaces for dialogue. The programme brought together Jordanian and Syrian families, helping parents and children form relationships in positive spaces. It reached 7,000 people from refugee and non-refugee communities.	Action Contre La Faim	2014
Ma'an	<p>Initially launched in 2007, the Ma'an programme aims to reduce violence against children by reducing the use of corporal punishment and other violent approaches. It focuses on the development of teacher skills, the formation of school groups that work together towards a common goal, an online survey to help students report violence, and positive approaches in schools. These include the involvement of councils, groups, student parliaments, and the engagement of teachers.</p> <p>In year 2017-2018, a Civil Code of Conduct was launched, as well as a Safe School Board at each school, with the purpose of creating structured and positive interactions within all parties in school as well as with parents. This process also entailed training of members on code of conduct.</p> <p>The monthly e-surveys continue to be conducted.</p> <p>Materials for training are also being reviewed and updated.</p>	MoE, UNRWA, Military Education Schools, and supported by UNICEF	<p>Launched in 2009</p> <p>Still in existence and expanding</p>
Cultivating Inclusive and Supporting Learning Environment	The programme trained educators (N=4,700) and MoE trainers (47) to help address conflict-related trauma by encouraging interactive pedagogies, and also reached out to students (N=102,955, 7,738 of whom are Syrian refugee students), and created 80 Community-Parent Coalitions	USAID, supported by the Queen Rania Teacher Academy and MoE	2013-2016

Based on these findings, the report proposes these key recommendations:

- **Bringing data and results together:** As social cohesion programmes have already been implemented, studies and reports have noted that more data are needed to examine the effectiveness of these projects. This report finds that collecting and sharing data across projects is key to understanding the advantages and limitations of current initiatives. Furthermore, current or previous projects may already have unpublished data that provides valuable lessons and insight to the contextual challenges in Jordan.
- **Support teacher well-being:** As reviewed in this report, teachers in public schools who teach Syrian refugee students are employed on short-term contracts without securities and benefits. Furthermore, teachers do not have adequate training or support to respond to the diverse and challenging needs of refugee communities. The report thus shows that improved training resources and work conditions are crucial to reducing discrimination within schools and to empowering teachers to become agents of change by promoting peacebuilding values. In addition, additional challenges are influenced by the insufficient number of certified teachers within the needed areas of expertise. However, employing Syrian refugee teachers has proved beneficial and valuable in camps and other settings in Jordan.
- **Creating shared spaces:** Many studies noted that creating spaces for interaction between refugee and non-refugee communities is a key step to enhancing social cohesion. Studies found that creating these spaces yields to a change in negative perceptions and may help communities form friendship and bonding. In schools, the double-shift system continues to segregate the two communities, resulting in isolation, bullying, and fear. This report recommends that initiatives must at least enhance opportunities for positive interactions after school hours.
- **Involving the broader community:** While social cohesion programmes in Jordan have sought to involve the wider community in Jordan, most initiatives have engaged with women and youth only. Programmes must also involve men and the wider

community for a more comprehensive approach to social cohesion. In schools, this report finds that parent meetings and interactions are also important.

- **Addressing the psychosocial needs of refugee students:** Syrian refugee students face war-related trauma in addition to low well-being due to hardships experienced in displacement. Social cohesion planning is linked with improving well-being and addressing the psychosocial needs of communities. Schools and teachers may help identify students with poor mental health. Additionally, counselling services and more long-term psychosocial support initiatives are needed.

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